

The Beginning of Faith Genesis 15:1-6

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." 2 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" 4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

What do you do with someone who makes promises and then does not keep them?

Well most of us would not believe them after a while would we?

But I want us to notice that God made some very great promises to Abram.

Genesis 12:2-3 (NKJV) ² I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Genesis 12:7 (NKJV) ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

Genesis 13:14-17 (NKJV) ¹⁴ And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are--northward, southward, eastward, and westward; ¹⁵ for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. ¹⁶ And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered. ¹⁷ Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

And then we come to chapter 15. In this morning's passage Abram is beginning to wonder about all these promises.

For if all these things promised are to come true Abram must have children. But so far they have none. He was 75 when he left Haran for Canaan. Now he is about 80 and Sarai is about 70 and they are not getting any younger.

What is God waiting for?

What God is waiting for is for the time to come when it is impossible for them to have children. That way it is no question as to how it happened.

When Abram is finally a full 100 and his wife is 90 they will have the promised child.

For the next 20 years from chapter 15 Abram will continue to believe. That does not mean his faith will never waver. But it does mean that he will always have faith in the Lord.

- I. After these things
 - A. We all have THINGS in our life.
 1. Abram was no different.
 2. Abram had just come back from a mini war.
 3. He had put his life and the lives of all his servants on the line to save Lot and his family from what was then a might army of a mighty kingdom.
 4. What is to say that these people will not now get together a larger army and come after this new upstart and slaughter them all.
 - B. But Abram will always have things that will try his faith.
 1. Later, during a famine, he will leave the promised land and head to Egypt.
 2. This is a lack of faith that God can provide for him and his leaning on Egypt for support.
 3. He will tell a half lie.
 - a. Is there such a thing as a half lie?
 - b. He will tell them that Sarai is his sister, which she is half sister.
 - c. It was true but it was mean to deceive.
 - d. Tell the story of the Episcopalian priest stopped for speeding in New York with his wife in the car. The cop let him go with a sorry Father. His wife asks, you know that was not honest to let him think you were a Catholic priest. He says I was not concerned about that so much as who he thought you were.
 - e. But Abram tells a lie because he does not trust that God will be his shield as He promised in this passage.
 - f. And once again in chapter 20 almost the very thing is repeated with a ruler in Canaan.
 4. Later Sarai cooks up a scheme to get a son through her servant girl.
 - a. That doesn't go well of course for obvious reasons.
 - b. Have you ever noticed that things become more obvious once you step over the edge of the cliff.
 - c. But you see they could trust God to do what He said He would do so they are going to help the Lord out.
 - d. So many difficulties and sorrows come from that one bad decision.
 5. But the greatest challenge to Abram's faith will come after Isaac is a teenager.
 - a. In chapter God asks Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering to the LORD.

- b. This what something that Abram was familiar with for it was practiced by some of the religions of Canaan.
- c. Even though Abram does not understand, he does as he is told.
- d. The very next day he sets out for the place.
- e. After leaving the servants, he and Isaac go on alone.
- f. But just before he is to plunge the knife into Isaac God stops him and provides a ram for a sacrifice.
- g. Heb 11:17-19 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.
NKJV
- h. So by this time I think we could say that Abraham's faith is strong.

How is our faith?

Are we still trusting the Lord each day?

Are we trusting in Him for the difficult things in our life?"

You know that the disciples of our Lord did not always display great faith. Sometimes Jesus referred to them as "little faith" people.

As we see in the life of Abraham, his life always went better when He trusted in the Lord.

And many times his life would have been dramatically better if he had acted in faith rather than in unbelief.